

MID-EAST e-NEWS

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Welcome

On page 3 is a selection from an NPR interview with two journalists embedded with the military in Iraq that aired this week. I thought it valuable, and have postponed the second part of the article over the internal conflicts (*Civil War?*) within the Muslim world. If you want to read a more positive article on the Iraqi military go to this Houston Chronicle web page:

<http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/headline/world/3227778>

We will be in Pa. for three weeks for a conference, but I hope to be able to bring **e-NEWS** for you as usual at the end of the month.

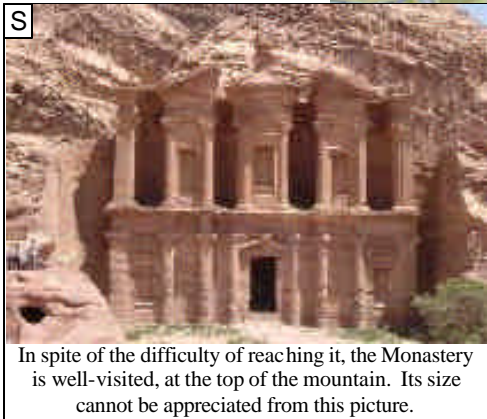
Email your responses to pkclark@pmbx.net & check the web for back issues.

Petra

For 300 years or more the Nabataean Empire controlled much of what is now Jordan, and was only acquired by Rome in AD 106. One of their kings, Aretas, was referred to by Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11, since at that time Damascus was under the control of the Nabataeans. This is an introduction to some of the wonders of their monumental city.

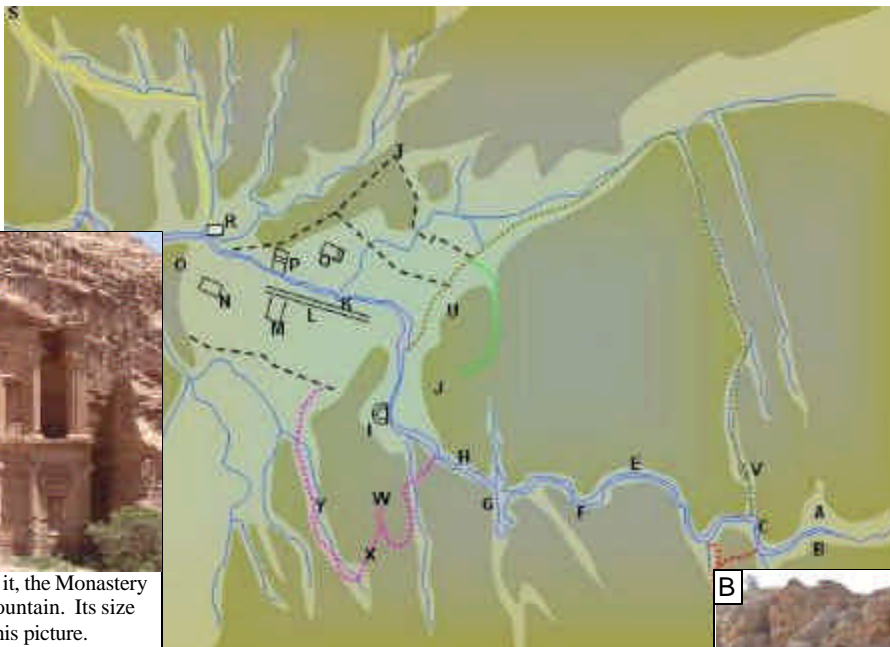
The cliff carvings were tombs to their dead, and not used as residences. Some tombs (eg. Triclinium) have seats around the perimeter, where the family could gather on anniversaries.

The Nabataeans themselves lived in stone buildings within the

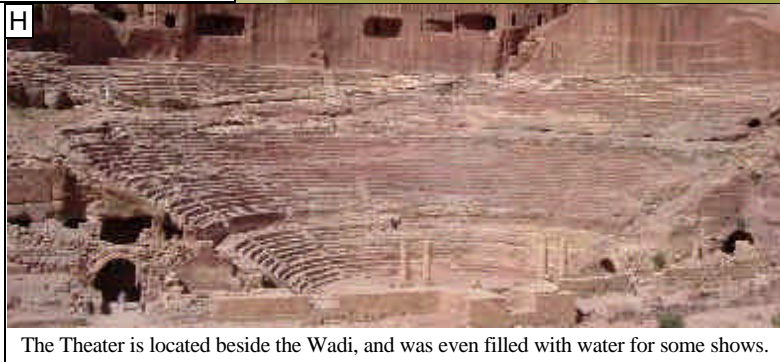


In spite of the difficulty of reaching it, the Monastery is well-visited, at the top of the mountain. Its size cannot be appreciated from this picture.

enclosed mountains, but these are totally destroyed, and now one can only see the stones scattered across the hillsides and visualize what it might have been like.



The mile-long *Siq* opens out to this stunning view of the *Treasury*. (Names of these tombs are not the original).



The Theater is located beside the Wadi, and was even filled with water for some shows.



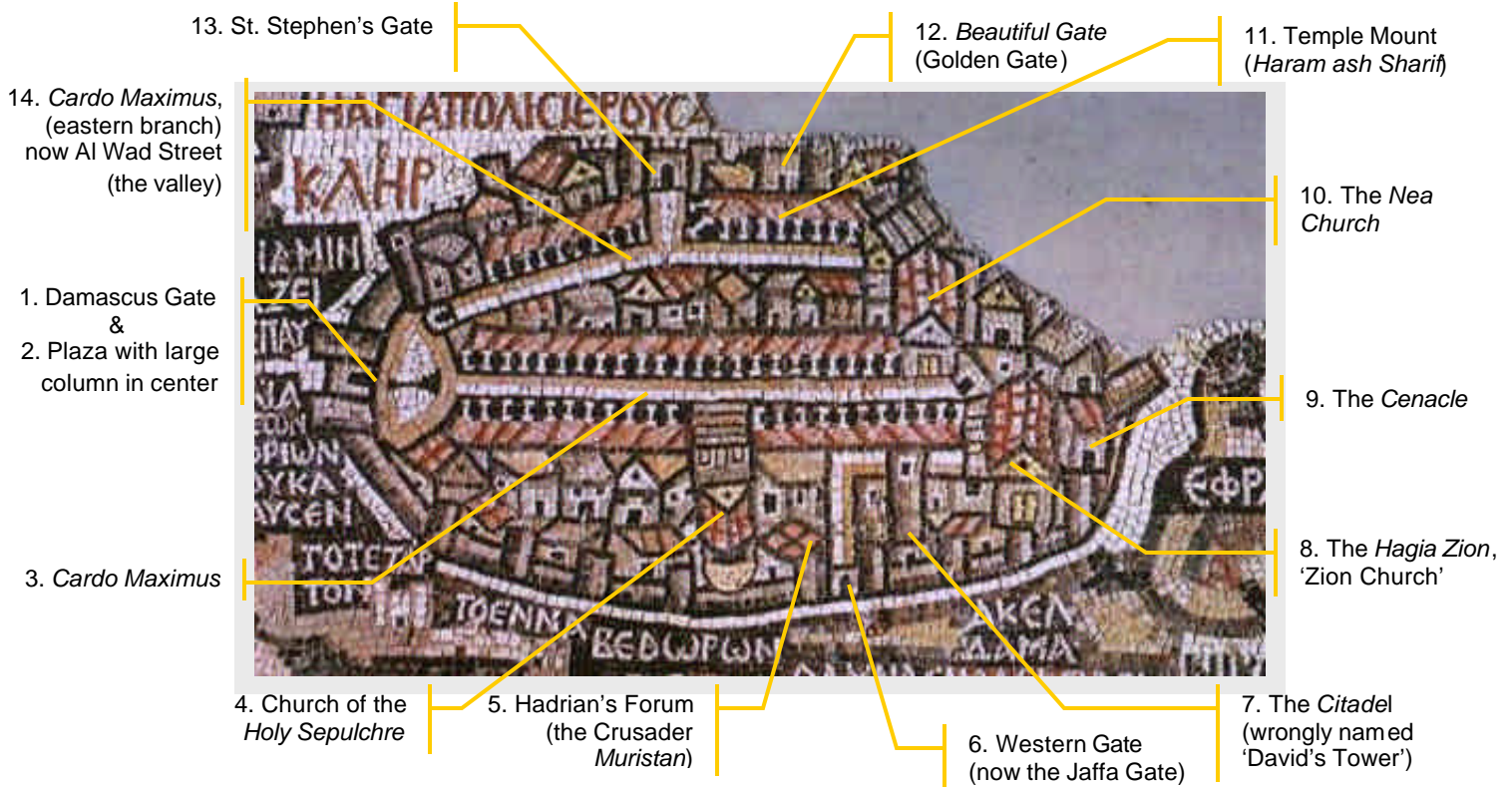
On the approach to Petra the Nabataean (above) and Greek styles are evident in these two tombs.

For a more thorough visit, see the Web Site at www.morethantourists.com

Jerusalem – the Madaba Map

The reconstruction of Jerusalem after Bar Kochba's rebellion was initiated by Hadrian. At that time he renamed the city Aelia Capitolina, Aelia being Hadrian's family name. In that period, as we see from other Roman cities, there were standard city plans that were implemented, with significant buildings common to many cities though differing in size and design. For example, in Amman the Roman city boasted a *Cardo*, colonnaded street, a Forum, Nymphaeum (fountains and other water features) and a theater. Today these features have almost totally disappeared under the modern city, but they and many more monumental buildings can be seen in Jerash, further to the North.

In the case of Jerusalem, we are fortunate to have archaeological evidence for the layout of the Roman city in the form of the Madaba Map, located in the floor of the church of St. George. The church is a recent construction, but the map dates from the 6th Century, about 535 AD. Below is a detail of the map, showing Jerusalem, its walls, gates and significant buildings, along with a key to the major features. (Today the Zion Church, Cenacle and ruins of the Nea Church are outside the walls of Jerusalem.)



Notes:

1. The Roman Gate has recently been excavated, and can be seen adjacent to the current gate, about 6 meters below.
2. The Arabic title for the Damascus Gate is Bab Al Amoud (Gate of the pillar) possibly after this ancient monument.
3. A major shopping bazaar still runs along the line of this ancient street, and in some shops Roman arches can still be seen.
4. The church is depicted 'upside down.' It was not constructed until the 4th Century. (see a later issue of *e-NEWS*).
5. On the site where Hadrian had a Forum (plaza) the Crusaders built some of their hospitals, now it hosts a tourist bazaar.
6. Still, today, from the Jaffa Gate a street runs into the city before making a right turn into the Armenian Quarter.
7. Herod's citadel originally was protected by three towers, and his palace was beside it. Very little trace of the palace has been found.
8. Hagia Zion is a 4th Century church commemorating the room where the disciples met after the ascension (and thus linked to the other 'Upper Room' of the Last Supper).
9. The Cenacle is the traditional site of the Tomb of David. It is generally recognized that the Tombs of David and the original Mt. Zion, was located on the ridge below the Temple Mount, and not on the Western Hill, as it is now named.
10. The Nea 'New' Church of Mary was built by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian and completed in 543 AD.
11. Hadrian planned to build a temple to Jupiter on Mount Moriah, the site of Herod's Temple, but there is doubt as to whether he did. Some documents suggest that there was a temple, but if so it was destroyed either by or before the 7th Century Muslim invasion.
12. Archaeology seems to suggest that the Beautiful Gate has survived since the time of Hadrian. Heraclius entered through it when retaking Jerusalem in 629 AD, but it was closed by the Muslims when the Haram ash Sharif was being established. In Herod's day a bridge crossed the Kidron Valley from the Beautiful Gate across to the Mount of Olives.
13. St Stephen's Gate (also known as the Lion's Gate) is now the main eastern gate.
14. This branch of the *Cardo* now runs alongside the west wall of the Temple Mount (Haram Ash Sharif).

Cultural Conflict

I was listening to an NPR program recently, which related the stories of two journalists who were embedded with a US/Iraqi military group. The report described the problems the US and Iraqis had in working together, and is an interesting – though somewhat depressing – window into cultural differences. I wanted to select some comments from the program. One point to remember is that the journalists (Steve Fainaru & Anthony Shadid) were from the Washington Post, publisher also of Newsweek magazine. The questions (Q) are from an NPR presenter.

Q: The American soldiers that you were embedded with gave you a pretty withering appraisal of the Iraqi soldiers' readiness... What did they tell you?

SF: They were very candid that they were not ready, ... they were very early on in the process, ... they lacked a certain dedication, ... they lacked courage. One of the advisors even referred to the Iraqi army here as pre-schoolers with guns. There was one incident in particular... where the Iraqis were attacked on a bridge and instead of confronting the insurgents they fled, ... and the Americans had to go find them. ... for the Americans, in a situation like that, to run was simply unacceptable. When the leading American advisor returned to the base... he lined them up, then told them they were cowards, and referred to them as women, and essentially wimps.

Q: Anthony Shadid, you were traveling with the Iraqi army soldiers... what were their complaints?

AS: Most of the Iraqi soldiers though they were treated poorly... they thought their weapons were kind of substandard, they kind of looked in envy at what the Americans had, armor-plated Humvees, the most modern weapons, and they were most often settled with 20-year old AK47s. I think at a deeper level though, often the Iraqis did not feel they were respected by their American colleagues, that they were exposed to the same dangers, asked to do the same duties, ... they felt that the Americans looked down on them.

Q: You describe an incident where the Iraqi soldiers refused orders from the US soldiers to arrest everybody inside a mosque...

AS: For the Iraqis the very idea of going into a mosque with guns was uncomfortable to them, ... this is where they lived, they know everybody in the neighborhood... one person told me that when the Americans asked them to arrest the leader of the mosque they then sat down on the sidewalk and refused to do so. ... he said, "We had to show the Americans that we wouldn't do this in the future. We had to teach them a lesson."

*I asked them if they would ever enter a mosque to arrest people there. What they told me is that usually when the Americans will approach a mosque they have a **suspicion** of somebody inside. To them that was unacceptable, you had to be 100% sure. If they were 10%..., 20%..., 30% sure, that wasn't good enough for them, it wasn't worth the repercussions they would have to face when they went back to their homes.*

AS: (in response to a question about threats the Iraqi soldiers had received). When I was sitting with them at their housing compound nearly every one of them had received a letter warning them to quit the Iraqi army or to face an attack. I was sitting one day with 15 of them and... 5 had actually had their houses attacked... You often see the Iraqi soldiers on patrol wearing masks or handkerchiefs over their faces to hide their identity. When they go into these houses... they are searching the houses of their neighbors and their relatives, and there's a certain degree of humiliation about that.

Comments

Whilst the opinions of NPR or the Washington Post may or may not reflect readers' views on the war in Iraq, the comments do provide insight into some of the cultural issues we have covered in e-NEWS.

We can look at this from two perspectives: (a) the actions of the Iraqi soldiers and (b) the responses of the US troops.

(a) When facing danger, one has to value one's cause more than one's life. In Saddam's Iraq, and other Arab regimes, a solution to this problem has been for the military command to be even more repressive than the threat the enemy poses.

(b) These comments accurately target the Iraqis' pride but would not endear them to the Americans, nor encourage a sense of duty. It might have been how they were addressed by Saddam's commanders, but they also would be prepared to deliver on physical threats, which the US military is not. The military command structure, then, is at a disadvantage until it can replace the fear-based persuasion that Arab society expects.

(In *The Arab Mind*, Raphael Patai notes that across the Arab world the general pattern is that "the incidence and severity of corporal punishment administered to Arab children is much greater" than in the West. It is the norm for the father to be "severe, stern, and authoritarian," and that "children are disciplined, if necessary severely, in order to make them accept, and acquiesce in, paternal rule," p27.)

(a) Arab society is collectivist, relational, and religious in ways that are difficult to comprehend in the West. In regard to these issues, their personal pride revolves around what their family and acquaintances think, more than the rights or wrongs of a situation. To arrest a recognized offender is one thing, but to arrest someone whose offense is not accepted by the community is much more difficult.

If you want to listen to this program yourself, on the web go to <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4698396>

